

Org. Labor

UNITED STATES SECTION,
JOINT UNITED STATES-MEXICO
TRADE UNION COMMITTEE

Room 504, 815 Sixteenth Street, N. W.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES SECTION, JOINT UNITED STATES-MEXICO TRADE UNION COMMITTEE

The United States Section of the Joint United States-Mexico Trade Union Committee calls upon the Secretary of Labor to meet his responsibilities and resist with increased vigilance the constant efforts of employer groups to dominate the Foreign Farm Labor programs and to evade their obligations as its users and as the beneficiaries of millions of dollars of government subsidies. We ask him to act to prevent farm employers of foreign contract labor from continuing to evade their responsibilities towards our citizen farm workers and the Mexican "braceros" and other farm workers who come to our country as honored guests to help meet valid shortages of farm labor.

Due to widespread unemployment among our own farm workers at this time, we call on the Federal Government to establish a special program to transport unemployed United States farm workers to areas where shortages of farm labor now exist. We believe that in view of the approximately one million United States farm workers now seeking work in this country, Public Law 78 requires that there should be a drastic curtailment of the number of foreign workers imported this year.

We especially condemn the abuses which farm employers, in their efforts to escape the labor provisions of the Mexican Contract Labor Law, have made of the time-honored practice of non-quota issuance of visas to citizens of our good neighbors to the South. This Committee calls on the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to halt the granting of such visas and other "special" immigration permits for farm employment, since agricultural workers coming here under such devices

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lack all of the protection against exploitation provided and intended by Congress when it established a Mexican Contract Labor Program. Organized labor, as the foremost supporter of liberal immigration policies, must protest with all its vigor this distortion of the non-quota visa system from a policy intended to promote goodwill and international understanding into a base device used by farm employers to oppress farm workers. The Committee asks the President of the United States to protect the valid principles behind this nation's historic policy of an "open door" for our Latin American neighbors by directing an immediate halt to the issuance of visas and other border-crossing permits which are clearly intended only to provide farm employers with underpaid foreign labor for exploitation.

The Committee views with alarm the smaller appropriation in next year's budget to handle the Mexican Contract Labor Program although the need is greater than a year ago.

The Committee expresses its grave concern and condemns efforts being made to introduce bills which would extend the Mexican Contract Labor Law, due to expire next year, indefinitely, thus making a program that began as a temporary war-time measure, a permanent feature of our nation's farm labor policies. The introduction of this amendment at this time, when unemployment has reached 4.5 million and is rapidly rising among our own citizens, is not only an affront to all United States workers, but reveals the callous disregard for the suffering of domestic farm labor which has been too prominent a characteristic of too many backers and administrators of the program since its inception.